

The Old Hickory Bulletin

Old Hickory Church of Christ

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A Letter to Your Wayward ...

Dear _____,

As the trials of our mortal lives have come and gone, and even now some linger, in the peace and quiet of this moment, my heart swells with the great love that I have for you. It is the certainty and steadfastness of that love that compels me to pour my heart out to you. In that love, there is only the strongest desire for your well being, and that great good does not befall anyone by accident. Only the Creator of all people provides the key which unlocks the greatest blessings that it is possible for man to possess, and it is

only found in His word. He sent His Son to earth with a message for all and a path to the kingdom of the only true and living God. God is holy, but man was not, so the blood of a perfect man, Jesus Christ, had to be offered as the price for redemption. What great love God and His Son have for us that He has graciously offered for us to be His children. Jesus Christ is the way, the truth and the life. No person gains access to God but through Jesus Christ. And we cannot go through Him if we do not do what He said that we must do.

Certainly every person has the ability to form “beliefs,” which each one uses to lean on as they pass through this life. But “beliefs” are like excuses and opinions – everyone has their own. Everyone had their own before Christ died on the cross. If each could acceptably decide in his own eyes what was right for him, why did Christ have to die for all men? The truth is that men can never devise for themselves the right way to walk. We all had to be shown the right way to walk and the correct things to believe by Jesus Christ. The only faith that is acceptable to God is the faith that comes by hearing the words of Jesus Christ.

We are all in a short life, and death will come soon enough. When the dust settles from the great Day of Judgment, no persons “beliefs,” opinions or excuses will stand for anything – not mine, not yours, not anyone’s. All that will matter is what God said in His word. And what we bring to Judgment, who we are in our hearts and what we have done while here, will be examined by what Jesus Christ has spoken.

Dear one, you are not ready for that Day. Your life is out of step with the way Christ has shown us. Please let God's word show you the true and living way in Jesus Christ. Please let me help you with encouragement and strength in the love I have for you and for God. Jesus Christ died for you and wants you to come to Him. He will help you to be what you can be in the eternal kingdom. Please let me help you. I love you.

Your loving _____,

Your Name

The Greatest Tragedy

Some tragedies surpass others. The death of an only son is a tragedy of tragedies, yet it is not the **greatest** tragedy. I remember sitting with parents whose son shipwrecked his faith and became an atheist. In tears his mother said, "I could have buried him easier." I did not doubt it. I could have found more words of comfort at a grave than in such circumstances.

Look at the **greater** tragedy — the lost soul. There is nothing but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries. (Heb. 10:27) It means to be banished from God's presence (2 Thess. 1:7) to a demon's hell. Mans most terrible experience describes the anguish. Not one pleasant thing is found there — not even a drop of water for a parched tongue. The degraded and outcasts, the heartless and oppressors, the arrogant and hypocrites are its inhabitants. And there is no escape — no end — no relief. Such thoughts stagger the imagination, but a lost man is NOT the greatest tragedy!

The greatest tragedy is to be lost and **content**. A man who knows he is lost and is disturbed over his prospects will not stay lost. Jesus died for him. Teach him the truth and such a man will obey. Angels and men will rejoice. It is far different with the lost man who is satisfied.

There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death. (Prov.16:25) A man feels he is right — is satisfied with his religion — as he contentedly walks to his own destruction.

For they have healed the hurt of the daughter of my people slightly, saying, Peace. peace: when there is no peace. (Jer. 8:11) It is healing like giving a diseased man some tranquilizers and telling him he is fine. He needs to know his condition so he can seek help.

Some brethren can't understand our concern for them, — after all, **they** are not worried. “Come back,” we cry. But he echoes Judah's words, Wherein shall we return? (Mal. 3: 7) Preacher, what are you talking about? Return? We haven't been anywhere. He is perfectly satisfied to be half-hearted, though it nauseates the Lord. (Rev. 3:15-ff) View the greatest tragedy — lost and content.

Others know the truth, know their life is wicked, know the blessings of faithfulness and the wages of sin. What can you say? He knows your pleas before you say them; he has voiced them himself in times past. He tasted the good things and deliberately embraces the world. It is impossible to renew him to repentance (Heb. 6:1) — the greatest tragedy.

I reason with my religious neighbors; they are insulted. “You think I am lost.” No matter what I think, are you lost? Religious folk can be lost and feel safe (Mt. 7:21-ff). You may be an admirable person — even a zealous church worker, and yet be lost. Such commendable traits make the tragedy of your being lost the more lamentable. What a shame you should be content to be less than a Christian — that is the greatest tragedy.

- Joe Fitch, via Plain Talk, May, 1969

John Wesley had this for his rule of life:

Do all the good you can.
By all the means you can.
In all the ways you can.
In all the places you can.
At all the times you can.
To all the people you can.
As long as ever you can.

SUNDAY'S LESSONS: Sunday morning: *"I Will Sing!"* (text: Psalm 100);
Sunday evening: Jesus Christ: A Closer Look – *Increased Intensity for the Vine Growers!* (Mark 11:27 – 12:12).

SCHEDULE: Our Vacation Bible School is scheduled for June 20-24, 7:00 PM, with Dwayne Gandy as our guest speaker. Our Fall Gospel Meeting is scheduled for Sept. 18-23, with Eric Reynolds.